



18 February 2014

Dear Principal,

We are writing in regards to the Senate inquiry into school funding that is now underway.

This inquiry will look at the development and implementation of the Gonski funding arrangements across Australia.

It is a timely inquiry given the uncertainty around the future funding arrangements for schools. As you will be aware, the Abbott Government has only committed to providing Gonski funding to public schools until the middle of 2017.

It is vital that we use this inquiry to make it clear how important proper needs-based funding arrangements are for individual schools along with the additional resources agreed to in the six year Gonski agreements.

The Senate committee needs to hear why this funding must be delivered in full to your school and the difference it would make for your staff and students.

Could you please consider putting in a quick submission on behalf of your school community.

To assist we have created a purpose built submission page on the I Give a Gonski website at www.igiveagonski.com.au/senate_submission. It has a small number of fields where you can outline how additional resources would be used at your school to better meet the learning needs of students and to enhance the skills and knowledge of teachers.

There are a number of ways you could develop your submission but we would urge, if possible, that you discuss and get input from parent representatives and teachers.

You will find more information in the Questions and Answers Guide that is attached below.

(We would ask that you bring this to the attention of your school's union and parent representative).

Yours sincerely

Angelo Gavrielatos
Federal President
AEU

Peter Garrigan
President
ACSSO

Gabrielle Leigh
President
AGPPA

The Senate Inquiry into School Funding

Q. What is the inquiry about?

A. In December last year a Senate Select Committee was established to enquire into the development and implementation of the Gonski school funding arrangements.

[The terms of reference for the inquiry](#) are broad: they encompass the Commonwealth's financial contribution to Gonski, how that money is being distributed to states and territories and what funding arrangements are in place for individual schools.

They also cover the issue of how the Gonski funding will be used to meet the needs of students in schools and the extent to which school leaders are able to adequately plan for how they will use additional funding.

Q: Why should our school make a submission?

A: The most powerful evidence presented to the Gonski Review was in individual school submissions. That gave the expert panel conducting the review important information on exactly what the resourcing needs of schools were and how they were not, in many cases, being met. This time it is vital once again to get evidence from schools **about the difference the promised funding would make over six years** and how it would be used to better meet the learning needs of students and to improve outcomes.

Q: What if we don't know how much money we will be getting under Gonski?

A: The reality is no school knows exactly what Gonski funding will be delivered over six years and that lack of transparency is something that needs to be addressed. But to get an idea of the dollar amount, you can check the figure originally calculated for each school by the Gillard Government. You can find that [here](#). Use this as an indication of the resources available to you over the next six years and then consider the type of staffing and program changes you could deliver as a result. *(The reason your actual funding may vary from the Gillard Government figure is that each state and territory government will distribute its Gonski allocation using its own funding model. That should be broadly in line with the Gonski model although this remains a major problem in WA, the NT and QLD where no agreements are in place and there is no requirement to even distribute the money to schools.)*

Q: How can we make a submission?

A: The I Give a Gonski campaign website has a [special schools page](#) set up where you can make a submission quickly and easily. The submission page has a number of fields that will help make clear what areas to focus on. You can write as much as you feel is necessary to adequately convey your school's plan for the funding. See [here](#) for link to the page where you can make a submission.

Q: What should our submission cover?

A: You will see on the submission page on the Gonski website the suggested fields. The four that cover Gonski funding are:

- **How additional resources would be used to improve student outcomes.** In this field you can detail the kind of strategies you would put in place across the school to lift achievement levels.

- **How additional resources would be used to meet the future learning needs of students with disabilities, indigenous students and those from low SES and non-English speaking backgrounds.** The beauty of the Gonski model is that it specifically allocates funding for each of these students and the larger the number, the higher the dollar amount. Here you can talk about the specific ways you would assist these children and what proportion they make up of your overall school population. It is critical that we give the committee a clear idea of why it is so important that additional resources are allocated for each of these groups of students.
- **How additional resources would be used to enhance teacher professional development.** You can talk about the extension of current PD or what you would like to do in the future, perhaps through the addition of specialists or lead educators who can work with staff on an ongoing basis. Mentoring and release time can be covered in this section.
- **Why it is important for our school to receive the full six years of Gonski funding.** It is obviously a matter of great concern that the Gonski funding is only guaranteed until the middle of 2017. You might want to talk about here the critical importance of long term certainty in funding and the need to be able to sustain a process of change in schools to get to the point where it is really impacting on what teachers and students do in the classroom. If you have been in a situation where gains have been made through equity program or National Partnership funding and then that has been taken away that experience is also worth mentioning.

Q. What will happen with our submission after it is submitted online?

A: The submissions will be downloaded and taken to Canberra on March 18 when the four Gonski vans touring the country are due to arrive at Parliament House. They will then be presented to the politicians running the Senate inquiry for the consideration of the committee. Each submission will be published on the inquiry's web page (without details of the person who submitted it or their contact details) unless you specifically request on the Gonski webpage that it remain confidential.